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**Summer research and internship in India inspire life's calling for Kathy Julik-Heine '10**

*Summary: Julik-Heine, Taylor Falls, conducts research with Pareena Lawrence, professor of economics, and serves as an intern with WomenPowerConnect in India this summer.*

(July 23, 2009)-Kathy Julik-Heine '10, Taylor Falls, made a tough decision during her first year at the University of Minnesota, Morris. She was torn between the hustle and bustle of working as a camp counselor or a “mystery-box offer” to serve as a research assistant for Pareena Lawrence, professor of economics. Julik-Heine was unsure of what to expect from the research position. But, thanks to great advice from her professors, she opened the mystery-box lid and discovered more than she hoped for—her life’s calling.

“This is my dream job,” Julik-Heine remarks. “[This research] has taught me to work for others in a way that does not impose one’s own beliefs on what is right and wrong on another society. The subject completely sets my mind afire, and after more than a year, I am still as excited about it as the day I started.”

Lawrence, who also serves as chair of the Division for Social Science, studies the effectiveness of reservation for women candidates in local government elections as a means to empower women in India’s northern states, specifically Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. In some regions of India, women are often treated as second-class citizens, although they have equal rights under law. Domestic abuse is high with about 20 percent of wives reporting abuse. The Panchayat Raj Act, passed in 1992, sets aside one third of local government seats at the state level—similar to the position of a city major—for women. This is an especially important government requirement in a culture where societal norms often relegate women to the home or low wage jobs.

“Seeing the pride, independence and self respect that [working in politics] has brought to [women] is unbelievably inspiring,” reflects Julik-Heine.

Throughout her partnership with Lawrence, Julik-Heine’s research role has ranged from data analysis, coding surveys, and writing and editing portions of the book they plan to publish, to traveling to northern India this summer to collect the final data. Julik-Heine, who serves as Lawrence’s research assistant through the Morris Academic Partnership program, states: “The work I have done for this project, from the mundane to the dynamic, has changed my life, rejuvenated my passion for social development, and shifted my world paradigm time and time again.”

As for traveling and living abroad, Julik-Heine couldn’t be more ecstatic. She describes it as heaven. One of the most rewarding parts of the experience has been establishing relationships with Lawrence’s co-author, Kavita Sharma, and with Sharma’s family. Julik-Heine fondly recalls an early morning stroll with Sharma around Sukna Lake discussing feminism. Julik-Heine has also grown very close to Sharma’s daughter, Shiva, who plans to attend the University of Minnesota, Morris in the fall of 2010.

Julik-Heine has also built strong relationships with fellow research assistants Katie Wutchiett '12, Bloomington, and Angela “Dot” Schiappacasse '11, Burnsville. A vivid memory for Julik-Heine is the research team hiking more than an

hour in the mountains to interview an Indian woman , the Panchayat president, for the project.

Conducting research in India with Lawrence has been a life changing experience for Julik-Heine, as has an internship that has allowed her to remain in India for the remainder of the summer. She is living in New Delhi as part of an internship with WomenPowerConnect, an independent organization that lobbies the Indian Parliament for women's interests and organizes activism programs.

In order to earn the WomenPowerConnect internship, Julik-Heine, with the help of Lawrence, trumped the organization's three-year tradition of choosing Harvard Law School students for the intern position.

All that and an elephant ride to celebrate Independence Day, there's got to be a downside to conducting research and an internship in India, right? There is, shares Julik-Heine. The self-proclaimed early bird has become accustomed to India's relaxed sense of time and scheduling. With a smile, she says: "I will probably return to the states and be constantly late for a while."

Julik-Heine will finish a degree in economics at the University of Minnesota, Morris, when she returns from India.

Photo above: Katie Wutchiett '12, Bloomington, Kathy Julik-Heine, Taylor Falls, and Angela "Dot" Schiappacasse '11, Burnsville

Photo below: Schiappacasse, a research interviewee, Lawrence, and Julik-Heine

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